Measures for smooth travel of Haj pilgrims

455. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

(a) whether the Ministry had taken any measures for the smooth travel of Haj pilgrims from India;

(b) if so, whether there is any statistics with regard to Haj pilgrims annually from Kerala;

(c) what are the measures taken for the Haj pilgrims from Kerala; and

(d) whether the Central Government proposes for introduction of large aircraft from Kerala due to the heavy rush of Haj pilgrims and less number of low cost airlines in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The number of ballottee pilgrims carried from Kerala's Kozhikode station during the last 3 years *viz.* 2007, 2008 and 2009 is 8606, 9938 and 8600 respectively.

(c) and (d) A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with M/s. National Air Services (NAS) of Saudi Arabia to carry pilgrims from Calicut to Jeddah. NAS had provided aircrafts having a capacity of 238 seats and had agreed to mount additional capacity towards the end of Phase I to make good any possible shortfall.

Small airports in NER

456. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any plan for setting up of small airports in North Eastern Region States to boost the tourism sector which is one of the major revenue earning head;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the major locations and target set for the airports to be operational for service; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and what important approach has been taken up by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It has been decided to construct three greenfield airports at Pakyong (Sikkim), Cheithu (Nagaland) and Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh) in the North Eastern Region. Of these three airports, work at Pakyong airport in Sikkim has started with the Probable Date of Completion (PDC) in January, 2012. The other two greenfield airports are at the planning stage.

Hike in airfares for Haj pilgrims

†457. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has hiked air fares for Haj pilgrims this year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the current fares for each Haj pilgrim and the separate details of actual fares and subsidy thereon;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.